

Memo

To: Senator Thomas G. Courtney and Representative Vicki Lensing
From: Patrick Palmersheim
Date: 6/12/2007
Re: Government Oversight – Update, County Grant Program for Veterans

Purpose and Process: 2006 Iowa Acts, chapter 1185, section 34, enacted the County Grant Program for Veterans. One million dollars was appropriated to the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) to fund the program for FY07, which was created to improve services to veterans through the County Commissions of Veterans Affairs. The maximum matching grant to be awarded a county was \$10,000 (matched by the county on a dollar-for-dollar basis).

IDVA's administrative rule governing this program was effective on 1/29/07. (Enclosure #1) The rule placed on IDVA the responsibility to assess each grant application based on the following factors:

- Need – identify needs not being addressed (or inadequately addressed)
- Goals – goals of a project outlined, and sources of services provided identified
- Results – quantitative measurement of successes identified (time line for delivery)
- Innovation – project addresses new practices addressing the needs
- Accountability – application demonstrates financial accountability

IDVA coordinated the administration of this program with its assigned Assistant Attorney General and individuals with audit and grant backgrounds to ensure compliance before taking applications.

A standardized application was published on 4/12/07. (Enclosure #2) County Commissions were also provided an "approved" and "unapproved" uses list. (Enclosure #3) Legal advice indicated that since the intent of the legislation was to improve services to veterans, only services involving living veterans should be considered eligible for grant consideration (e.g., grant monies could not be spent on headstones, funeral, etc.).

Program Application: Applications were accepted through the close of business on 6/4/07. Sixty-seven (67) counties (68%) applied for a grant for awards totaling \$578,096.33. (Enclosure #4)

Challenges: Several challenges in administering this program were identified:

- The Department and its Commission were uncertain as to which entity had responsibility for writing the administrative rules relating to program administration. This delayed the publishing of the rules. This confusion was remedied by passage of HF 817, which, among other things, vested in the department that responsibility.

- Before legal counsel/individuals with audit and grant backgrounds were engaged to advise the department on grant administration, County Commissions believed they were eligible for the maximum grant amount if their budget had an appropriation for a like amount. Further, they could use the monies as they determined. This created frustration when they were informed by the department it would only match on a dollar-for-dollar basis “approved uses” already expended up to \$10,000, and that the monies received could only be expended on approved uses. The department advised that it would match “projected” expenditures at 50% of future expenditures on approved uses.
 - The delay in administering the program benefited County Commissions with smaller appropriations because they had accumulated approved use expenditures they were able to match.
- Although the standardized application was designed with the assessment factors in mind, the counties varied in their ability to present with particularity the needs and goals they intended to address upon receipt of the grant. Clearly, they all intended to use the grant to increase services to veterans. This challenge was created, in part, by the compressed time that counties needed to apply (recognizing they also needed to have a Commissioner and member of the Board of Supervisors both sign the application). The application evolved, in many cases, into more of an accountability tool—ensuring that the amount of the grant received was appropriately matched against an approved use already expended (or a projected expenditure of an approved use). This was done by requesting and obtaining the Commission’s most recent year-to-date Expenditure Report, which identified approved uses expended to date (and having the application detail how projected expenditures would be used).
- Some counties mistakenly believed that the grant was a reimbursement. They suggested that their Auditor intended to roll over any unspent grant money this fiscal year into the county’s general fund. The department spent considerable time speaking to Commission members and its Directors/Administrators and Auditors to explain the difference in application.
- Many counties were unaware that their Commission budget needed to be amended to reflect an increased spending authority. They were advised that their Auditor would have to publish a notice reflecting as much, and that their Board of Supervisors would have to address that issue by minute or resolution.
- Since the grant was administered later in the fiscal year, counties were advised they could roll over unused grant monies into the next fiscal year.
 - Some counties received their grant too late to permit their Auditor and Board to take action this fiscal year (as described above). The grant will be earmarked in the Commission’s budget for next fiscal year.
 - The department has offered to the President of the Iowa State Association of County Auditors to provide an email detailing the program, which she, at her discretion, could share with her fellow Auditors.

Moving Forward: Counties must submit a report to the department by August 15, 2007, detailing how the grant was used to increase services to county veterans. The department has committed to providing a template for their use. The department, in turn, must provide a report to the legislature detailing the program’s success on October 1, 2007. The department believes that the blending of the application (which ensured a match to approved use year-to-date expenditures) with the August 15 report detailing how grants monies were spent, should provide the accountability envisioned by the legislation and administrative rule. The Program was extended into next fiscal year and was funded at \$750,000. The department has advised county’s that it won’t be accepting applications until after their August 15 report submission deadline (it is hope this will ensure timely report submission, and they will focus on providing the necessary detail in their report to make the department’s October 1 report meaningful).

Conclusion: The department believes that given the compressed schedule, a 68% participation rate with \$578,096.33 being awarded represents some measure of success in the program’s first year. Overall, however, success will be determined through analysis of the August 15 reports submitted by the grant recipients.

CHAPTER 12 COUNTY GRANT PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

801—12.1(81GA,ch1185) Purpose. 2006 Iowa Acts, chapter 1185, section 34, enacts the county grant program for veterans. The general assembly appropriated a total of \$1 million to the Iowa department of veterans affairs to fund this program. The purpose and legislative intent of this grant program is to improve delivery of services by the various county commissions of veteran affairs to veterans in their respective counties.

801—12.2(81GA,ch1185) Grant amounts. The Iowa department of veterans affairs shall award grants in amounts up to a maximum of \$10,000 to each county submitting an application that is approved by the department. In order to qualify for a grant, a county must agree to expend an amount of county funds equal to the amount of the approved grant.

801—12.3(81GA,ch1185) Application procedure. Counties that wish to apply for a grant shall submit an application to the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, Camp Dodge, Building A6A, 7105 NW 70th Avenue, Johnston, Iowa 50131. The application shall contain the following:

12.3(1) Application summary. The application summary shall consist of a brief description of the proposed project and the signatures of a member of the board of supervisors and a member of the county veteran affairs commission.

12.3(2) Narrative. The narrative shall explain the proposed project for which the funds will be used. The narrative must address the assessment factors listed in rule 801—12.4(81GA,ch1185). The assessment factors may be addressed in any sequence that is logical for the proposed project, but all factors should be identified and addressed. Any factors that are not addressed in the application may result in a reduced opportunity for funding of the project.

12.3(3) Proposed budget. The budget for the project should be developed for fiscal year 2007. It is understood that funding for subsequent years is dependent upon future legislative appropriations.

12.3(4) Letters of intent. If the proposed project involves additional funding from other sources, letters of intent to support the project are required from those additional sources.

801—12.4(81GA,ch1185) Assessment of applications. The Iowa department of veterans affairs will make decisions on the applications based upon the following factors:

12.4(1) Need. The needs of the local veteran population that currently are not being addressed or that are not being addressed adequately are clearly identified.

12.4(2) Goals. The goals of the project are clearly outlined, and the sources of the services to be provided are clearly identified.

12.4(3) Results. A time line for the delivery of the proposed services is included. Quantitative measurements of success appropriate to the project are clearly identified and are expected to address the identified needs.

12.4(4) Innovation. The project addresses the implementation of new practices and methods for addressing the needs of the veteran community and improvement of delivery of services.

12.4(5) Accountability and project monitoring. The application demonstrates financial accountability and provides mechanisms to ensure proper evaluation of the project.

801—12.5(81GA,ch1185) Application decision. The director of the Iowa department of veterans affairs shall notify each county that submits an application of the department's decision regarding the county's application. An explanation of the reasons for the rejection of a project application and suggestions for improvement shall accompany project denials.

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801—12.6(81GA,ch1185) Grant agreement. Each county that is awarded a grant will be required to enter into an agreement with the Iowa department of veterans affairs that specifies the reporting requirements.

ENCLOSURE #1

A written report shall be due to the department by August 15, 2007, and shall provide an assessment of the project, including measurable outcomes such as increased opportunities to publicize veterans' benefits, the number of outreach visits conducted to allow veterans to apply for benefits, the number of applications for benefits filed as a direct result of the project, and increased opportunities for veteran involvement in local veterans' organizations.

801—12.7(81GA,ch1185) Appeals. Applicants that are dissatisfied with the decision of the director of the Iowa department of veterans affairs may file an appeal with the Iowa commission of veterans affairs. The written appeal must be received within 15 working days of the date of the notice of decision; must be based on a contention that the process was conducted outside of statutory authority, violated state or federal law, policy or rules, did not provide adequate public notice, was altered without adequate public notice, or involved conflicts of interest by staff; and must include a request that the commission review the decision and the reasons for the appeal.

The Iowa commission of veterans affairs shall review the appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting and shall issue a final decision.

These rules are intended to implement 2006 Iowa Acts, chapter 1185, section 34.

[Filed emergency 1/29/07—published 2/28/07, effective 1/29/07]

COUNTY GRANT PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

| NUMBER | COUNTY | GRANT AMOUNT | NUMBER | COUNTY | GRANT AMOUNT |
|---------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Allamakee | \$10,000 | 34 | Iowa | \$10,000 |
| 2 | Appanoose | \$10,000 | 35 | Jackson | \$5,243.74 |
| 3 | Black Hawk | \$10,000 | 36 | Jefferson | \$7,615.80 |
| 4 | Bremer | \$4,913.51 | 37 | Johnson | \$10,000 |
| 5 | Buchanan | \$10,000 | 38 | Kossuth | \$10,000 |
| 6 | Buena Vista | \$6,708.06 | 39 | Lee | \$10,000 |
| 7 | Calhoun | \$6,847.24 | 40 | Linn | \$10,000 |
| 8 | Cass | \$10,000 | 41 | Lucas | \$5,793.76 |
| 9 | Cedar | \$6,244 | 42 | Lyon | \$7,479.44 |
| 10 | Cherokee | \$10,000 | 43 | Mahaska | \$10,000 |
| 11 | Clarke | \$10,000 | 44 | Marion | \$10,000 |
| 12 | Clay | \$10,000 | 45 | Marshall | \$10,000 |
| 13 | Clayton | \$3,926.23 | 46 | Mills | \$10,000 |
| 14 | Clinton | \$10,000 | 47 | Monroe | \$10,000 |
| 15 | Crawford | \$10,000 | 48 | Montgomery | \$6,004.27 |
| 16 | Dallas | \$10,000 | 49 | O'Brien | \$10,000 |
| 17 | Decatur | \$7,518.40 | 50 | Osceola | \$3,750 |
| 18 | Delaware | \$10,000 | 51 | Plymouth | 6965.61 |
| 19 | Des Moines | \$10,000 | 52 | Pocahontas | \$8,867.86 |
| 20 | Dickinson | \$10,000 | 53 | Pottawattamie | \$10,000 |
| 21 | Dubuque | \$10,000 | 54 | Poweshiek | \$7,723.76 |
| 22 | Emmet | \$8,635.53 | 55 | Sac | \$6,649.09 |
| 23 | Fayette | \$10,000 | 56 | Scott | \$9,274.65 |
| 24 | Lloyd | \$10,000 | 57 | Sioux | \$10,000 |
| 25 | Franklin | \$10,000 | 58 | Tama | \$10,000 |
| 26 | Fremont | \$4,529.13 | 59 | Union | \$10,000 |
| 27 | Greene | \$7,362.48 | 60 | Van Buren | \$10,000 |
| 28 | Guthrie | \$2,718.10 | 61 | Wapello | \$10,000 |
| 29 | Hancock | \$10,000 | 62 | Warren | \$10,000 |
| 30 | Hardin | \$10,000 | 63 | Washington | \$10,000 |
| 31 | Howard | \$3,146.35 | 64 | Wayne | \$6,416.59 |
| 32 | Humboldt | \$10,000 | 65 | Webster | \$10,000 |
| 33 | Ida | \$3,762.73 | 66 | Winnebago | \$10,000 |
| | | | 67 | Winneshiek | \$10,000 |
| | | | | TOTAL | \$578,096.33 |

County Grants

Examples of Approved Uses of Funds

- Increased office hours
- New office space (rent)
- National training
- State Training
- VIMS Program
- Computer or laptop
- Printer
- Copier
- Scanner
- Video projector
- Cell phone
- Stamps, postage
- Office supplies
- Van transportation to VA hospitals
- Counseling
- Rent assistance
- Office telephone
- Medical fees, medical supplies and medical equipment
- Utility deposits
- Haircuts for the homeless
- Dental and vision for the homeless
- Food pantry for veterans
- Homeless stand downs

Examples of Unapproved Uses of Funds

- Burial assistance
- Pay increase
- Grave markers
- Flags
- Care of graves
- Conference room furniture
- State flags
- No donations to third party accounts

THIS LIST IS NOT ALL INCLUSIVE

APPLICATION FORM
COUNTY GRANT PROGRAM FOR VETERANS
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Camp Dodge, Bldg. A6A
7105 NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, IA 50131-1824

Telephone: 515-242-5331 1-800-838-4692 Facsimile 515-242-5659

Patrick.Palmersheim@idva.state.ia.us

The *County Grant Program for Veterans* is designed to improve the delivery of services to veterans by County Commissions of Veterans Affairs. Applicants for grant consideration must complete this application and submit it to the Executive Director, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA), at the address identified above. The maximum grant to be awarded to a county during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2006 is \$10,000.00. Counties seeking a grant shall match the amount of the grant (the grant is not an offset to the County Commission's budget and shall be used solely for the purposes stated in the grant application). **Each county receiving a grant shall submit a report to IDVA no later than August 15, 2007, identifying the impact of the grant on increasing services to veterans.**

COUNTY AUDITOR INFORMATION

County Name: _____
Tax Identification Number (TIN): _____
Contact Person: _____
Street: _____
City/Zip Code: _____
Telephone: _____
Facsimile: _____
Email Address: _____

COMMISSION INFORMATION

County Service Office: _____
Contact Person/email: _____
Street: _____
City/Zip Code: _____
Telephone: _____
Facsimile: _____

GRANT REQUEST

Amount Requested: \$ _____

ENCLOSURE #2

GENERAL GRANT INFORMATION

- For more information concerning the grant program, refer to 801 Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 12. (Enclosed)
- To qualify for a grant, a county must agree to expend (or has spent) an amount of county funds equal to the amount of the grant being requested. On projected expenditures, the grant will only be approved for one-half of that expenditure.
- A member of the County Board of Supervisors and a member of the County Commission of Veterans Affairs must sign the grant application, attesting by certification that the approved grant monies will be used for the purposes stated in the grant and will be matched by county funds.
- Amendments must be approved by the Executive Director, IDVA. Amendments to spending must be consistent with the stated purpose of the grant. Notice of amendments may be accomplished by email to the Executive Director.
 - Submit an expenditure exceeding 10% of line-item grant authorization;
 - Submit any new line items added;
 - Make no expenditure until amendment approved.
- The IDVA, or its designee, may conduct an on-site audit of the grant's performance without prior advance notice to the grant recipient.
- Unspent grant monies may be carried over for 12 months from the expiration date (June 30, 2007) of the grant upon approval of the Executive Director, IDVA.
- No later than August 15, 2007, each county receiving a grant shall provide an assessment of the grants performance, including quantitative measurable outcomes with copies of receipts for all grant expenditures.
 - Provide proof that the county matched the grant funds.
- Applicants dissatisfied with the action taken on the application may file an appeal within 15 working days of the date of the notice of decision with the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs. See 801 IAC section 12.7.

GRANT SUMMARY

Describe the **purposes** for which this grant is being requested (needs of veteran community not currently being addressed):

Detail how the grant will **improve the delivery of services** to veterans in your county (how will the goals of the service delivery system be improved by the grant—itemization of delivery of services, such as training, equipment, food voucher, etc. Itemization should reflect a county expenditure committed to matching (or has been spent) the grant amount requested). See the enclosed handout of approved costs identified as examples improving the service delivery system depicted in this application:

[illegible]

What are the **measurable outcomes** for which you are requesting support (how many veterans will be served/benefited, how will they be benefited, how have the previously identified services been positively impacted, quantitative measures of success clearly identifying the results, etc.):

Is there **other information** that might be considered as the application is considered (innovative practices and methods for addressing the needs and improvement of the service delivery, demonstrated financial accountability—mechanism to ensure proper oversight and use of grant funds for the express purpose stated in the application):

COUNTY CERTIFICATION

The below undersigned certifies that the grant money will be used for the stated purposes in the grant application and that the county will provide increased funding (or has already made an expenditure) to match the line item amount of the approved grant. Further, no later than August 15, 2007, the undersigned will provide to the Director, IDVA, an assessment of the grants performance, including quantitative measurable outcomes with receipts.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| County Board of Supervisors (Member) | County Veterans Affairs Commission (Member) |
|--------------------------------------|---|

Date:

FOR INTERNAL ACTION ONLY

Executive Director, IDVA

- ☐ Approved. I certify that the grant application meets all legislative program requirements.
- ☐ Disapproved.
- ☐ Decision deferred pending receipt of more information from applicant.

Director, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs

Date